WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for enabling a first network to control a loop avoidance protocol in a second network, the first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol instance, the first and second network being communicably coupled, the method comprising:

receiving a protocol packet from the second network at a first switch;

forwarding the protocol packet to a second switch in the first network;

processing the protocol packet at the second switch according to a loop avoidance protocol corresponding to the second network; and

transmitting a message controlling the port state of a third switch based on the processing.

2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the forwarding includes modifying the protocol packet so that the protocol packet is able to be tunneled through the first network.

3. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the controlling includes modifying a port state of the third switch.

4 The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the third switch is not the same as the first switch.

5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the third switch is the first switch.

6. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first and second networks are connected by the shared use of the first switch.

7. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the protocol packet is a BPDU.

8. A system comprising:

a first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance;

a first switch in the first network;

a second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol instance; wherein

the first network is communicably coupled to the second network;

the first network receives a protocol packet from the second network;

the first network forwards the protocol packet to the first switch;

the first switch processes the protocol packet according to a loop avoidance protocol corresponding to the second network; and

the first switch transmits a message controlling the port state of a second switch in response to the processing.

9. The system as recited in claim 8, wherein the first and second networks are connected through the shared use of the second switch.

10. The system as recited in claim 9, wherein the second switch receives the protocol packet.

11. The system as recited in claim 8, wherein the protocol packet is a BPDU.

12. A first network running a loop avoidance protocol wherein the root bridge for the first network is disposed in a second network running a distinct loop avoidance protocol instance.

13. A system comprising:

a first network including a plurality of switches;

a second network including a plurality of switches;

the first and second network connected by at least a shared switch, the shared switch including a plurality of ports including a second network port connected to the second network;

the first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol instance;

wherein one of the bridges in the second network controls the state of the second network port.

14. The system as recited in claim 13, wherein the state of the second network port is controlled based on a protocol packet received from the second network.

15. A computer readable storage medium including computer executable code for enabling a first network to control a loop avoidance protocol in a second network, the first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the second network not running the

first loop avoidance protocol instance, the first and second networks sharing at least one switch, the code performing the steps of:

receiving a protocol packet at a first switch;

forwarding the protocol packet to a second switch in the first network;

processing the protocol packet according to a loop avoidance protocol corresponding to the second network; and

transmitting a message controlling the port state of a third switch based on the processing.